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OPENING STATEMENT AT THE FIRST SESSION OF THE PREPARATORY COMMITTEE FOR THE WORLD CONFERENCE ON HUMAN RIGHTS BY THE SECRETARY-GENERAL OF THE WORLD CONFERENCE

1. Some years ago we entered a new era in international affairs. The clouds of confrontation receded and we witnessed an encouraging return to multilateralism and to the ideals of the founders of the Organization. On the international scene confrontation seemed to give way to cooperation; and this development was also visible in the field of human rights. Under the circumstances, I felt that it would be both timely and appropriate to reflect upon and to consolidate what has been achieved in the field of human rights, to identify the problems ahead and to assess what new directions should be pursued with respect both to machinery and to standards and priority areas of concern for the coming years, with a view to making the United Nations system an even more effective tool for the achievement of the high ideals embodied in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

2. I thus suggested to the General Assembly in October 1989 that a world conference on human rights be held for the purpose of dealing at the highest level with those crucial issues. In my view, such a Conference would be a focal point for common reflections and might be a way to prepare ourselves better for the challenges of the coming century.

3. You will, I am sure, understand the particular pleasure and honour I have today in declaring open the first session of the Preparatory Committee for the World Conference on Human Rights. This is truly a historic occasion as we begin to set in motion the process which we all hope will bring to every inhabitant of our planet a world of, in the words of the Charter, "better standards of life in larger freedom".

Historical perspective

4. That the human individual has inherent dignity and rights is a most fundamental concept. It is not the monopoly of any one society, culture or age, rather its roots spread across the spectrum of human experience and even back to the dawn of human history. Tragically, this has not been the only thread in the fabric of society, for often - far too often - man has invented and defended ideologies which attack the very essence of human dignity. In our own century we have seen such theories rise, and prosper for a time, preaching hate, division and superiority and resulting in unmitigated horrors. But we have also, more recently, witnessed an unprecedented assertion by women and men in every part of the world of their fundamental human rights and human values, which also find universal reflection in the philosophies and religions of the world. This can truly give us hope for the future.

5. Two things stand out from the attempts to protect human rights on the international level prior to 1945. First, the lack of universality in those efforts: only some people were beneficiaries, only some human rights were taken into account, and the basic equality of human beings was not recognized. Second, the lack of effective international mechanisms of protection: the slave trade was outlawed 75 years before measures to stop it were taken; and the League of Nations was not able to rise to the challenge of effectively protecting minority rights. Only the procedures of the International Labour Organisation were there to show that effective action was possible.

Human rights and the United Nations

6. Given this historical background it is not surprising that the Charter of the United Nations, when it refers to human rights, reflects two main preoccupations: universality of rights and of beneficiaries; and effective international action to protect the human rights of every person. Looking back over the past 46 years, I think we can say that the United Nations has responded well to the challenge of the Charter. Universal standards have been drafted which cover almost every aspect of human existence, proclaim human equality and protect the rights of everyone against discrimination.

7. It is most reassuring to realize how high United Nations standards are. We have only to look at a recent document, the Convention on the Rights of the Child, or at our first text, the Universal Declaration, to see that the best practices and highest attainable standards inspired United Nations human rights documents, not the lowest common denominator.

8. Establishing effective international machinery to protect human rights was a more recent undertaking of the United Nations. The International Conference on Human Rights, held at Tehran in 1968, provided the international community with its first opportunity to assess the progress achieved since the adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, 25 years before. That Conference looked into the situation, *inter alia*, in the field of standard setting and laid the foundation for the various ad hoc implementation measures and mechanisms which were developed during the 1970s and 1980s, thus enabling

the United Nations to monitor the respect of human rights and fundamental freedoms in every field of its human rights activities and to expose violations of those rights wherever they might take place.

9. Today, we have in place a complex and far-reaching system of implementation, from the Expert Committees under human rights treaties to the working groups and special rapporteurs dealing with specific countries or types of violations, and including appeals for urgent action and complaints procedures also open to individuals. Further, a major element in these efforts of implementation has been to combat racism and racial discrimination, including apartheid, and to ensure equal rights for everyone. Most recently, there has been increased focus on assisting in the creation of national infrastructure, training officials through advisory services and technical cooperation and establishing broad support for human rights through information and education, in particular through the World Public Campaign for Human Rights.

10. We must also not forget the continuing research on new and emerging human rights problems (such as AIDS, the extremely poor, the environment) or on the meaning and implementation of existing standards (such as fair trial, independence of the judiciary, states of emergency, racial discrimination, economic, social and cultural rights) carried out by the Sub-Commission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities.

11. In these past decades we have come to realize that respect for human rights is central to achieving the two other principal objectives of the United Nations: maintaining international peace and security, and promoting economic and social development. To achieve respect for human rights we must promote democracy and effective participation of citizens in public affairs with all the attendant human rights, such as freedom of speech, association, and the press, which true democracy requires. Democracy is not only a basic human right; it is also a necessary ingredient for broader respect for other human rights. But we also know that democracy is not enough in itself to ensure the enjoyment of other human rights and that sustaining democracy and the stability necessary for progress requires the promotion of social justice. As the Secretary-General has said, "genuine political democracy has little chance to survive, and stability is bound to prove elusive, without social justice".

The World Conference

12. It was against this background that the General Assembly, after seeking the views of Governments, specialized agencies, United Nations organs, and non-governmental and other organizations, decided last December to convene the World Conference on Human Rights in 1993.

13. Broadly speaking, the objectives of the Conference are to review and assess at a high level progress in human rights since the adoption of the Universal Declaration; to identify obstacles and ways in which they may be overcome; to examine the relationship between development and the enjoyment by everyone of economic, social and cultural rights, as well as civil and political rights, recognizing the importance of creating the international conditions for their enjoyment; to examine ways to improve the implementation

of human rights standards and instruments; to evaluate the effectiveness of the methods and mechanisms used by the United Nations; and to make concrete recommendations for improving the effectiveness of United Nations activities and mechanisms and for the resources needed for that purpose.

Work of the Preparatory Committee

14. The Assembly gave the responsibility for the preparation of the Conference to this Preparatory Committee, open to all States Members of the United Nations or members of the specialized agencies. The Committee's mandate is to make proposals to the General Assembly regarding the agenda, date, duration, venue of and participation at the Conference. The Committee is also to advise on the preparatory meetings and activities which may take place at the international, regional and national levels, and on the desirable studies and other documentation. The Assembly also asked Governments, various human rights organs - including the Commission on Human Rights, the Sub-Commission and treaty bodies - specialized agencies and non-governmental organizations to assist by making their own recommendations.

15. The Commission on Human Rights at its forty-seventh session, in resolution 1991/30, gave particular attention to the World Conference and adopted a number of specific recommendations. The Commission, stressed the themes of universality, objectivity and non-selectivity, the equal importance and interdependence of all human rights, and democracy and development. It focused attention on the need for ratification by all States of human rights instruments, including the Covenant, and for effective implementation through national and international human rights measures. Suggestions were also made relating to meetings and other preparatory activities for the World Conference. The summary of the discussions on the World Conference at the forty-seventh session of the Commission on Human Rights is available as document A/CONF.157/PC/3.

16. The recommendations and views of other human rights bodies, such as the Human Rights Committee, the Committee on Elimination of Racial Discrimination and the Sub-Commission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities will also be presented to you by representatives of the various bodies.

17. This first session of the Preparatory Committee will thus discuss a number of important issues of a procedural nature, including its own rules of procedure and those of the World Conference, the dates, duration, venue and participation in the Conference and background documents and studies for use during the preparatory process. You will also have to set the Committee's future schedule of work.

18. We, in the secretariat, have made major efforts to bring the issue of the World Conference to the attention of the various human rights bodies, non-governmental organizations and members of the academic community in order to stimulate interest and ideas. At an early stage I have endeavoured to start the "intellectual" process of preparing the Conference, not least through extensive consultations with the regional groups and interested member countries in New York and Geneva, as well as with representatives of the non-governmental organization community.

19. As the documents before this Committee show, a great deal of thought has already been given to the World Conference by Governments, specialized agencies, non-governmental organizations, experts and members of the academic community. Recommendations touch on all phases of the preparatory process, the Conference itself and the expected results.

The World Conference as a process

20. To me, the convening of the World Conference is part of a larger process of reaffirmation and strengthening of human rights. This dynamic process is involving an ever-growing number of organs, institutions and sectors of society; and this should by itself strengthen human rights. The World Conference therefore, will be, at the same time, the culminating moment of the process and the beginning of a new stage in our quest for better protection of human rights.

21. We are, I am sure, all agreed on the broad focus of the World Conference to develop guidelines for the future through new and imaginative thinking. To my mind, it should not be a duplication of the debates of the Commission on Human Rights, or of the General Assembly. Rather, it should lay down the principles for future action in a constructive, non-confrontational and cooperative spirit.

22. Ultimately, the process leading up to the World Conference should result in the recognition of the paramount importance of human rights. Then we would be well on the road to achieving what I refer to as the "universal culture" of human rights which will, through the deep commitment of all sectors of society and public opinion to the protection of human rights, ensure to each individual a life in which his or her human dignity is fully respected. Internationally, this would mean clear recognition in the overall structure and resources of the United Nations system of the fundamental importance of human rights. Thus, alongside the already well developed areas of maintaining international peace and security, and economic and social development, human rights would find its rightful place as an equal among equals. Should this not already be our objective in considering the future shape of the United Nations? A United Nations geared to the year 2000 and beyond rather than to 1945?

23. The transcendental character of human rights should also be recognized by States nationally and in their mutual relations. Ensuring respect for human rights should become a common responsibility of all States; they should separately and together strive for the effective enjoyment of human rights and against their violation in every corner of the world. The human rights priority should prevail over other considerations.

24. Finally, we must ensure that at the national level the defence of human rights is a priority; a priority that, like charity, begins at home. In the words of Eleanor Roosevelt:

"Where, after all, do universal human rights begin? In small places, close to home - so close and so small that they cannot be seen on any maps of the world. Yet they are the world of the individual person; the

neighbourhood he lives in; the school or college he attends; the factory, farm or office where he works. Such are the places where every man, women and child seeks equal justice, equal opportunity, equal dignity without discrimination. Unless these rights have meaning there, they have little meaning anywhere."

Reaffirming of international standards

25. In striving to achieve these objectives, I can see three important elements to be expected from the World Conference process. First, we should by mobilizing the energy and efforts of all human rights organs and bodies, as well as non-governmental organizations and individuals, unequivocally reaffirm and safeguard the international standards adopted and proclaimed by the United Nations. These high standards are part of humanity's common heritage and we should pass them on strengthened to coming generations. Concretely, we can act to uphold existing norms and ensure that new proposed standards are really necessary and do not endanger those already existing by confusing, overlapping or lowering requirements.

Universal application of United Nations norms

26. Second, and here we can turn to the concerns of the founders of our Organization, we must ensure the universal application of United Nations standards; no individual should be excluded from the protection of United Nations human rights norms. Can we not already set as our objective universal ratification of basic human rights treaties before 1993 and seek ways of bringing that about? We could open a sustained dialogue with those States that have not ratified our basic instruments to encourage ratification and to identify obstacles and help overcome them. For my part, I can assure you that prompt and careful consideration will be given to requests for assistance in overcoming obstacles to ratification under the advisory services and technical assistance programme.

27. An important element in assuring universal respect for human rights is the elimination of discrimination and in particular racial discrimination. This should indeed be present in our activities and thinking relating to the World Conference.

Improved implementation

28. Third, we should aim at the full implementation of human rights in the lives of people throughout the world through effective national and international action. In fact, one question should be the keystone of all our efforts: do they enhance the quality of life and improve the way people live? The Universal Declaration has branched out like a mighty tree into some 70 covenants, conventions and other international instruments. But without implementation, if these noble undertakings do not become a living reality for men, women and children all over the world, these branches are reduced to dead wood.

Holistic approach

29. We have learned much in the past years about the unique challenges raised in applying human rights in concrete situations. A good example of such experience is our work relating to the rights of the child and the implementation of the Convention, which are pertinent to the whole human rights programme.

30. First, we know that the rights of the child must be viewed as a whole and progress sought in each area simultaneously, since failures in one sector can hinder the overall progress of children's rights; and that, in addition, progress in children's rights also depends on respect for human rights in the society at large. Second, we have become aware of the importance of involving children directly in dealing with their own problems and the importance of promoting national action on a broad basis for promoting children's rights. Third, we have seen the potential in harnessing the specific programmes benefiting the child in the many United Nations organs and agencies so as to obtain the best results when the programmes are carried out.

31. It has been most encouraging to see that the very existence of the Convention has enlarged the sensitivities of organizations working in one particular field to the whole range of human rights and that the Convention has been recognized as the universal standard: a holistic approach is thus necessary. The parts of our human rights endeavour are not isolated compartments, they form a cohesive unity.

National implementation

32. One of the important elements in preparing the World Conference will be to determine those national factors, institutions and activities which enable human rights to be protected effectively. Such elements as the incorporation of international norms into national law, the adequacy and responsiveness of national law, courts and the administration, and the existence of such institutions as the ombudsman and human rights commissions could be examined. For example, do all judges in the country have easy access to the Covenants and in their respective languages? New techniques of implementation at the national level should also be explored. Rules governing states of emergency should be strictly construed and their application subject to continuing international scrutiny. Ways could be considered for strengthening national awareness of human rights, especially among groups who are at risk of suffering violations, and new ways of communicating with the general public through, for example, grass roots organizations could also be explored. Strengthening non-governmental organizations should be a priority matter, as well as seeking ways of hearing the concerns of even the most marginalized sectors of society. To gather broad support, the setting up of national committees for the World Conference might be considered, to publicize the Conference, stimulate reflection and bring forth proposals. Consideration might also be given to including representatives of the non-governmental organizations in the national delegations to the Conference.

International implementation

33. We have today well developed international mechanisms for protecting human rights which could be reviewed from the point of view of their contribution to effective national protection. In this regard, we might consider in what way international monitoring activities, both treaty and non-treaty based, could be structured as to have a more direct impact on national efforts for the promotion of human rights.

34. Already, efforts are under way to make the operations of international mechanisms more efficient through, for example, the periodic meetings of the persons chairing the human rights treaty bodies. Over the past few years I have made suggestions regarding closer cooperation between bodies, such as the recent joint meeting of the Sub-Commission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities and the Committee on Elimination of Racial Discrimination, and I also made proposals to the last meeting of persons chairing the human rights treaty bodies on how the work of the Committees could be organized so as to improve its impact at the national level (A/45/636). Specific suggestions on improving implementation through the treaty bodies were made in a report to the General Assembly (A/44/668) by Mr. Alston, who is also the Rapporteur of the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights.

35. Another aspect of international implementation to be considered will be the role of international human rights bodies in conflict prevention and conflict resolution through promoting respect for human rights. We might ask what role the United Nations human rights organs have to play to prevent human rights problems from developing into conflict situations? Can the United Nations make itself available to assist in starting dialogue when problems are beginning to develop? Would there be room here for a "facilitator of dialogue", who would seek to stimulate discussions on emerging problems?

36. In other situations we might explore what forms of concrete involvement there might be for the United Nations in order to help ensure respect for human rights. The last few years have demonstrated that under the right conditions concrete United Nations involvement in specific situations can have positive effects. The United Nations might make a contribution to preventing or ending violations in such situations of threatened mass violations or when violations have the potential of affecting international peace and security, creating international tension or causing consequences such as mass exoduses. Here the concept of United Nations human rights monitors or a United Nations human rights presence could be explored, as well as the possibility of establishing an early warning system.

37. When it comes to assisting national protection of human rights we face a dilemma in our system. On the one hand, responsibility for implementing human rights obligations is divided amongst various bodies according to group, women, children, migrant workers, etc., or subject, prevention of discrimination, economic, social and cultural rights, civil and political rights, torture, etc. On the other hand, human rights are so deeply interdependent that, in fact, it is not possible over the long term to understand the enjoyment of one human right without understanding the

situation of the other rights and that of the individual concerned. In this connection, an increased attention to the ultimate subject of human rights, the individual, through a focus on the human rights situation of the particularly disadvantaged, might be part of an answer. This might also help us to understand better some of the root causes of violations.

38. Of course, fostering protection of human rights at the national level through the promotion of national institutions, laws and support for the participation of the people in the defence of their own human rights is of crucial importance. The role of model texts in this area could be examined.

Role of international organizations

39. The importance of international conditions for the effective enjoyment of human rights was recognized already in 1948 by the drafters of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which in its article 28 proclaims: "Everyone is entitled to a social and international order in which the rights and freedoms set forth in this Declaration can be fully realized". The meaning of this right should be more fully explored, as well as how the international community and international organizations can live up to their responsibilities. In dealing with the creation of international conditions propitious to respect for human rights, our attention must focus on those international actors, such as international organizations and transnational bodies, which directly affect national enjoyment of human rights.

40. One focus in preparing the World Conference will be to consider how to mobilize all sectors of the United Nations system in the efforts to promote human rights. We have already taken steps aiming at mobilizing all areas of the United Nations in our fight against racism and racial discrimination in the context of the Second Decade against Racism and Racial Discrimination. We have also endeavoured, through regular meetings, to coordinate human rights activities within the United Nations system. In addition, in connection with the various development activities of the United Nations, I have repeatedly drawn attention to the relevance of human rights standards. Over the past years we have seen major United Nations development-related documents include human rights considerations.

41. The interdependent nature of all activities in the international field, be they concerned with human rights, development, international peace and security or technical matters and assistance, requires that each and every sector of the United Nations system is conscious of its human rights obligations and the impact of its activities on respect for human rights. This is a formidable operational task which might require its own mechanisms of coordination and sensitization. Our objective in this respect at the World Conference and in its preparations could be to encourage international organizations and bodies to review the relevance of human rights to their activities and consider how to incorporate human rights considerations in their own thinking, following the universally established norms of the United Nations.

Preparatory meetings

42. In accordance with paragraph 3 of General Assembly resolution 45/155, the Preparatory Committee is mandated to make proposals for the consideration of the Assembly regarding preparatory meetings and activities at the international, regional and national levels. Already several such meetings have taken place. In December 1990 the NGO World Congress of Human Rights, held at New Delhi adopted several resolutions relevant to the World Conference and in June 1991 in Iceland a seminar of the Nordic Institutes of Human Rights considered matters relating to the Conference (A/CONF.157/PC/7). Also in June, the NGO Committee on Human Rights convened in New York in cooperation with the Centre a non-governmental organization consultation on the World Conference. In addition, our activities under the technical assistance programme highlight, wherever feasible, the aims of the Conference and its preparations. Undoubtedly, other meetings have already taken place and we certainly will see many in the future. We are discussing the possibilities for an academic conference bringing together specialists from all over the world to consider matters relating to the World Conference. For its part, UNESCO has proposed holding a conference on education, human rights and democracy.

43. At the national level, preparatory meetings could be convened by national committees for the World Conference, to review a number of human rights problems or particular issues, depending on the national context. Of course, the non-governmental organization community and academic institutions should be closely associated and the holding of such meetings could be a focal point for wide national campaigns of public information and awareness building. In generating awareness of human rights at the national level, we might consider how new channels of communication and mobilization might be used. We might involve professional associations of doctors, judges, the bar associations, journalists and other sectors of society.

44. It will, of course, be for this Preparatory Committee to determine which preparatory meetings should be organized as official parts of the programme and in what way other independent efforts at reflection can be encouraged and their results integrated into the World Conference process. A number of issues suggest themselves for preparatory meetings. One of these is based on 1 (b) of General Assembly resolution 45/155 and concerns the relationship between development and human rights and international conditions necessary to full enjoyment of human rights. The Human Rights Committee's suggestion relating to a study of democracy, development and human rights could also be kept in mind in this connection.

45. In approaching the issue of studies and documents for the World Conference we must keep in mind the many pertinent studies already undertaken of under way by human rights organs independently of the World Conference, the reports and documents prepared under the regular United Nations publication programme, for example collections of texts or lists of ratifications, and the results of the preparatory meetings. In addition, it may be expected that various human rights organs would wish to review their own activities and make their own recommendations; here I think, *inter alia*, of the report by the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination on the first 20 years of CERD activities. United Nations organs, the specialized agencies, regional

organizations, non-governmental organizations and others may wish to prepare similar studies and the Preparatory Committee might wish to encourage such activity. Through the participation of working groups and special rapporteurs the Preparatory Committee and the World Conference will have available to it information on a wide range of subjects, including indigenous populations, contemporary forms of slavery (in particular the situation of women and children), executions, disappearances, torture, the sale of children and religious intolerance.

46. Keeping these possibilities in mind, as well as the specific suggestions contained in document A/CONF.157/PC/CRP.1, the Preparatory Committee may wish to avoid duplication and commission especially for the World Conference only studies not being undertaken elsewhere and which will advance the objectives of the Conference. In the main, these studies should contain ideas and reflection, rather than a survey of the factual state of affairs, and include the review, assessment and identification of obstacles and ways of improvement. If we refer to the objectives of the World Conference as set out in paragraph 1 of General Assembly resolution 45/155 I might suggest basic documents of the following character:

(a) To review and assess the progress that has been made in the field of human rights since the adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and to identify obstacles to further progress in this area and ways in which they can be overcome;

47. In approaching this subject, which implies a good factual basis on international action since 1948, we may have to begin with a revision and updating of the publication United Nations Action in the Field of Human Rights originally prepared for the 1968 Tehran Conference. This might fall within previous suggestions in establishing a United Nations human rights database which would be inclusive of all United Nations work in the field, continuously updated and available for on-line use. Building on that, a study by one or more experts might be commissioned to assess that progress, and identify obstacles and ways to overcome them.

(b) To examine the relation between development and the enjoyment by everyone of economic, social and cultural rights, as well as civil and political rights, recognizing the importance of creating the conditions whereby everyone may enjoy these rights as set out in the International Covenants on Human Rights;

48. This subject, together with the democracy and development aspects pointed out by the Commission and the Human Rights Committee could be dealt with in a study or possibly at a preparatory meeting. The involvement of a wide spectrum of international organizations would be necessary.

(c) To examine ways and means to improve implementation of existing human rights standards and instruments;

(d) To evaluate the effectiveness of the methods and mechanisms used by the United Nations in the field of human rights;

(e) To formulate concrete recommendations for improving the effectiveness of United Nations activities and mechanisms in the field of human rights through programmes aimed at promoting, encouraging and monitoring respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms;

49. These three subjects may call for sectoral analysis dealing with the various elements in a global approach. I have already mentioned the study by Mr. Alston carried out for the General Assembly on the treaty implementation system; a similar approach might be considered for the various sectors for the World Conference. For instance, one study could be prepared on the treaty-based system, including such matters as communications and general comments; one study on the Charter-based system of special rapporteurs, working groups, communications, procedures, situations, etc.; one study on advisory services and technical assistance; and a further study on information and education. It may be expected that the proposed UNESCO conference on education, human rights and democracy will result in detailed proposals focusing on informal and formal education. In this connection, a basic consolidated bibliography is being established.

50. Many suggestions have been made - some in relation to preparatory meetings - on substantive matters which would be relevant to the work of the Preparatory Committee and the World Conference. In addition, a study or a meeting report could be considered to deal with methods and means to protect human rights nationally, strengthening existing ways and considering new approaches.

(f) To make recommendations for ensuring the necessary financial and other resources for United Nations activities in the promotion and protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms;

51. A study of the financial and human resources of the United Nations human rights programme should be prepared. This study would identify the type and quantity of the resources necessary to enable the United Nations to carry out effectively its human rights programme, taking into account the importance of the programme and the quantity of work involved, and make appropriate recommendations.

52. Based on the resolutions of the General Assembly and the Commission on Human Rights and the information submitted to the secretariat, other studies could deal with such subjects as strengthening the role of non-governmental organizations in protecting human rights, and their participation in the defence of human rights, new and emerging human rights issues, human rights as experienced by such groups as children, minorities, the extremely poor and excluded, indigenous peoples or members of racial groups, and new means nationally and internationally of implementing human rights. The preparation of a study on the protection and promotion of the human rights of women in international instruments and practice could also be given consideration. Confidence-building measures and human rights in conflict resolution might also be appropriate topics for studies. A high level preparatory meeting dealing with the root causes of violations might also be envisaged; we might find that rather few causes have multiple manifestations.

Panel of eminent personalities

53. I would like to suggest that consideration be given to setting up a panel of eminent personalities, who would reflect upon the various topics and come forward with innovative ideas and suggestions. Such panels have proved fruitful in other areas. For example, during my tenure as Secretary-General of the Conference on Disarmament and Development I established such a panel, which included Mr. W. Scheel, former President of Germany; Mr. R. Prebisch, former Secretary-General of UNCTAD; Mr. O. Obasanjo, former head of State of Nigeria; Mr. L. Klein, Nobel Prize laureat in Economics; Mr. E. Faure, former Prime Minister of France; Mr. A. Shahi, former Foreign Minister of Pakistan; Mr. O. Bogomolov, Member of the USSR Academy of Science, and former Director of the Institute of World Economics. The result of this meeting, the "Joint Declaration by the Panel of Eminent Personalities in the Field of Disarmament and Development" proved to be very useful and helpful to the preparatory process. The Preparatory Committee might wish to propose to the General Assembly that it authorize the Secretary-General of the World Conference to proceed along these lines and to solicit the extra budgetary resources necessary.

Budgetary requirements

54. At the time of the adoption of General Assembly resolution 45/155, it was not feasible to ascertain the additional requirements that would arise in 1992 and 1993 with respect to the preparatory process and the World Conference on Human Rights. It was clearly stated that the preparatory process and the Conference itself should be funded through the regular budget of the United Nations without any implications for the human rights programme. It was also stated that it would be necessary to strengthen the Centre for Human Rights through the addition of staff on a temporary basis and the provision of resources for travel and consultants. While a provision of \$US 1.5 million has been included in the proposed programme budget for 1992-1993, the Secretary-General will be in a better position to assess the financial requirements for the World Conference after the recommendations of this Preparatory Committee have been submitted to the General Assembly. Thus, it is my hope that careful consideration will be given to appropriate and realistic funding for the preparatory process and the Conference, bearing in mind, not least, the inability of the Centre for Human Rights to absorb new mandates within the present level of human and financial resources.

55. Distinguished delegates, the world we live in is one of sharp contrasts. Widespread violations of human rights, death, destruction, discrimination and stunted and blighted lives are the daily fare of many millions of people. We must be conscious of that suffering in line with the injunction of the Universal Declaration that we "act towards one another in a spirit of brotherhood".

56. On the other hand, great changes have taken place which can only encourage us to go forward to help build a better world for future generations. We have learned that concern for human rights is permeating all



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REPORT OF THE PREPARATORY COMMITTEE FOR THE WORLD
CONFERENCE ON HUMAN RIGHTS

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I. ORGANIZATION OF THE SESSION

1. The Preparatory Committee for the World Conference on Human Rights held its first session at Geneva from 9 to 13 September 1991, as mandated by the General Assembly in paragraph 6 of its resolution 45/155 of 18 December 1990. It held eight meetings during the session.

A. Opening of the session

2. The session was opened by the Secretary-General of the World Conference, who also addressed the Preparatory Committee at its first meeting. (See doc. A/CONF.157/PC/12 for the text of this statement.)

B. Attendance

3. The session was attended by representatives of the following States, United Nations bodies, specialized agencies, intergovernmental organizations, liberation movements, other organizations and non-governmental organizations:

States

Afghanistan, Algeria, Argentina, Australia, Austria, Bangladesh, Belgium, Bhutan, Bolivia, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Bulgaria, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic, Cameroon, Canada, Chile, China, Colombia, Congo, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Cuba, Cyprus, Czech and Slovak Federal Republic, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Denmark, Ecuador, El Salvador, Egypt, Ethiopia, Finland, France, Gabon, Germany, Ghana, Greece, Guinea, Holy See, Honduras, Hungary, Iceland, India, Indonesia, Iran, (Islamic Republic of), Iraq, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Jamaica, Japan, Jordan, Kenya, Kuwait, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Luxembourg, Madagascar, Malaysia, Malta, Mexico, Mongolia, Morocco, Myanmar, Nepal, Netherlands, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Nigeria, Norway, Oman, Pakistan, Panama, Papua New Guinea, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Republic of Korea, Romania, San Marino, Sao Tome and Principe, Senegal, Singapore, Somalia, Spain, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Sweden, Switzerland, Syrian Arab Republic, Thailand, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia, Turkey, Ukraine, Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United Republic of Tanzania, United States of America, Uruguay, Venezuela, Viet Nam, Yemen, Yugoslavia, Zimbabwe.

Human rights bodies

Commission on Human Rights, Sub-Commission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities, Committee Against Torture, Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women, Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, Human Rights Committee.

Working Group on Indigenous Populations of the Sub-Commission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities, Working Group on Enforced or Involuntary Disappearances of the Commission on Human Rights.

United Nations bodies

Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

Specialized Agencies

International Labour Organisation, United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, World Health Organization, World Bank, International Monetary Fund

Intergovernmental Organizations

Commission of the European Communities, Commonwealth Secretariat, Council of Europe, League of Arab States, Organization of African Unity

Other organizations

International Committee of the Red Cross

Non-governmental organizations in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council

(Category I)

International Confederation of Free Trade Unions, International Council of Voluntary Agencies, International Council of Women, International Council on Social Welfare, International Movement ATD Fourth World, International Youth and Student Movement for the United Nations, Inter-Parliamentary Union, Soroptimist International, World Confederation of Labour, World Federation of Trade Unions, World Federation of United Nations Associations, Zonta International

(Category II)

Afro-Asian People's Solidarity Organization, American Association of Jurists, American Association of Retired Persons, Amnesty International, Baha'i International Community, Caritas Internationalis, Commission of the Churches on International Affairs of the World Council of Churches, Co-ordinating Board of Jewish Organizations, Friends World Committee for Consultation (Quakers), International Commission of Jurists, International Council of Jewish Women, International Federation on Ageing, International Federation for Housing and Planning, International Federation of Human Rights, International Fellowship of Reconciliation, International Federation Terre des Hommes, International League for the Rights and Liberation of Peoples, International Movement for Fraternal Union Among Races and Peoples, International Organization for the Development of Freedom of Education, International Organization for the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, International Service for Human Rights, Latin-American Federation of Associations of Relatives of Disappeared Detainees, Law Association for Asia and the Pacific, Medical Women's International Association, Union of Arab Jurists, Women's International League for Peace and Freedom, World Assembly of Youth, World Federation for Mental Health, World Federation of Methodist Women, World Jewish Congress, World Union for Progressive Judaism.

(Roster)

World Association for the School as an Instrument of Peace, Minority Rights Group, Planetary Citizens.

4. Details of the composition of delegations appear in document A/CONF.157/PC/Inf.1.

C. Documentation

5. A list of the documents before the Preparatory Committee at its first session is contained in annex III to the present report.

D. Election of officers

6. At its 2nd meeting, on 10 September 1991, the Preparatory Committee elected the following officers:

Chairman: Ms. Halima Embarek Warzazi (Morocco)

Vice-Chairmen: Mr. Horacio Arteaga (Venezuela)
Mr. Fan Guoxiang (China)
Mr. John Swift (Ireland)

Rapporteur: Mr. Zdzislaw Kedzia (Poland)

E. Adoption of the agenda and rules of procedure

7. The Preparatory Committee had before it the provisional agenda for its first session document (A/CONF.157/PC/1) and annotations thereto (A/CONF.157/PC/1/Add.1). At its 2nd meeting, on 10 September 1991, the Preparatory Committee adopted the agenda on the recommendation of the Bureau. The agenda, as adopted, is attached as annex I.

8. At the same meeting, the Preparatory Committee decided, as recommended by the Commission on Human Rights in its resolution 1991/30 of 5 March 1991, that the rules of procedure governing its meetings should in so far as applicable be those of the functional commissions of the Economic and Social Council.

F. Organization of work

9. The Preparatory Committee had before it a programme of work proposed by the secretariat (A/CONF.157/PC/2/Rev. 1).

10. At its 2nd meeting, on 10 September 1991, the Committee decided to consider the items on its agenda in the following order: 1; 2; 3; 4; 5; 6; 7 and 8 jointly; 9.

II. STATEMENTS 1/

11. Statements on items 5, 6, 7 and 8 of the agenda were made by the representatives of the following States: Algeria (7th), Argentina (7th), Austria (7th), Bangladesh (3rd), Brazil (7th), Bulgaria (7th), Canada (6th), Chile (6th), China (6th), Colombia (7th), Costa Rica (6th), Cuba (7th), Cyprus (7th), Czech and Slovak Federal Republic (6th), Egypt (7th), El Salvador (7th), Germany (2nd and 7th), Honduras (7th), Hungary (6th), India (6th), Indonesia (6th), Iran (Islamic Republic of) (7th), Iraq (5th), Japan (7th), Jordan (2nd), Mexico (7th), Myanmar (7th), Netherlands (on behalf of the European Community) (2nd), New Zealand (6th), Norway (on behalf of the Nordic States) (2nd), Panama (7th), Peru (6th), Philippines (2nd), Poland (7th), Republic of Korea (7th), Romania (6th), Senegal (3rd and 7th), Sri Lanka (6th), Sudan (7th), Switzerland (6th), Syrian Arab Republic (7th), Tunisia (7th), Turkey (3rd), Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (2nd), United States of America (3rd), Uruguay (6th), Venezuela (7th), Yugoslavia (6th).

12. Statements on items 5, 6, 7 and 8 of the agenda were made by observers for the following human rights bodies: Commission on Human Rights (3rd), Sub-Commission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities (5th), Committee Against Torture (4th), Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (4th), Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (2nd), Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (4th), Human Rights Committee (3rd), Working Group on Enforced or Involuntary Disappearances of the Commission on Human Rights (7th).

13. A statement on items 5, 6, 7 and 8 of the agenda was made by the observer for the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (5th).

14. Statements on items 5, 6 7 and 8 of the agenda were made by observers for the following specialized agencies:

International Labour Organisation (4th), United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (3rd), World Health Organization (4th).

15. A statement on items 5, 6, 7 and 8 of the agenda was made by an observer for the International Committee of the Red Cross (4th).

16. Statements on items 5, 6, 7 and 8 of the agenda were made by observers for the following non-governmental organizations: American Association of Jurists (4th), Amnesty International (4th), Baha'i International Community (4th), Co-ordinating Board of Jewish Organizations (3rd), International Commission of Jurists (4th), International Confederation of Free Trade Unions (4th), International Council of Jewish Women (4th), International Council of Voluntary Agencies (4th), International Council on Social Welfare (3rd), International Federation for Housing and Planning (3rd),

1/ The numbers in brackets refer to the meeting at which the statement was made.

International Movement ATD Fourth World (4th), International Movement for Fraternal Union Among Races and Peoples (4th), International Organization for the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (5th), Latin American Federation of Associations of Relatives of Disappeared Detainees (5th), Law Association for Asia and the Western Pacific (4th), World Association for the School as an Instrument of Peace (5th), World Confederation of Labour (5th), World Federation for Mental Health (4th), World Federation of the United Nations Associations (5th), World Federation of Trade Unions (3rd).

III. AGENDA, RULES OF PROCEDURE, DATES, DURATION, VENUE OF AND PARTICIPATION AT THE WORLD CONFERENCE

17. At its 8th meeting, held on 13 September 1991, the Preparatory Committee adopted decision PC/1, entitled "Convening of the World Conference on Human Rights". For the text of the decision, see annex II to the present report.

18. Pursuant to paragraph 7 of General Assembly resolution 45/155, the Preparatory Committee, at its 8th meeting, on 13 September 1991, adopted decision PC/3, entitled "Participation of representatives of least developed countries in the preparatory meetings and the conference itself". For the text of the decision, see annex II to the present report.

19. At its 8th meeting, on 13 September 1991, the Preparatory Committee adopted decision PC/6, entitled "Participation of human rights experts in the Preparatory Committee and the World Conference". For the text of the decision, see annex II to the present report.

IV. PREPARATORY MEETINGS AND ACTIVITIES AT THE INTERNATIONAL, REGIONAL AND NATIONAL LEVELS

20. Pursuant to paragraph 7 of General Assembly resolution 45/155, the Preparatory Committee, at its 8th meeting, on 13 September 1991, adopted decision PC/3, entitled "Participation of representatives of least developed countries in the preparatory meetings and the Conference itself". For the text of the decision, see annex II to the present report.

21. With reference to the preparatory activities for the World Conference, the Preparatory Committee, at its 8th meeting, on 13 September 1991, adopted decision PC/1, entitled "Convening of the World Conference on Human Rights", in which it made a proposal concerning publicity for the Conference and the preparatory process thereto. For the text of the decision, see annex II to the present report.

22. At its 8th meeting, on 13 September 1991, the Preparatory Committee adopted decision PC/4, entitled "Regional meetings in preparation for the World Conference on Human Rights". For the text of the decision, see annex II to the present report.

V. STUDIES AND OTHER DOCUMENTATION FOR THE WORLD CONFERENCE

23. At its 8th meeting, on 13 September 1991, the Preparatory Committee adopted decision PC/5, entitled "Studies and documentation for the World Conference". For the text of the decision, see annex II to the present report.

24. At the same meeting, immediately prior to the adoption of the decision, the Chairman stated that it was the understanding of the Preparatory Committee that the Secretary-General of the Conference should consult all the regional groups before undertaking the studies referred to in subparagraph 1 of draft decision 5.

VI. ORGANIZATION OF THE WORK OF FUTURE SESSIONS OF
THE PREPARATORY COMMITTEE

25. At its 8th meeting, on 13 September 1991, the Preparatory Committee adopted decision PC/2, entitled "Future sessions of the Preparatory Committee". For the text of the decision, see annex II to the present report.

26. At the same meeting the Preparatory Committee adopted decision PC/6, entitled "Participation of human rights experts in the Preparatory Committee and the World Conference". For the text of the decision, see annex II to the present report.

VII. PROGRAMME BUDGET IMPLICATIONS OF THE DECISIONS ADOPTED BY
THE PREPARATORY COMMITTEE AT ITS FIRST SESSION

27. At its 8th meeting, on 13 September 1991, a statement of the programme budget implications of the decisions adopted by the Preparatory Committee at its first session was made.

28. At the same meeting, statements in connection with the programme budget implications of the decisions adopted by the Preparatory Committee at its first session were made by the representatives of Austria, Senegal and Venezuela.

VIII. ADOPTION OF THE REPORT OF THE PREPARATORY COMMITTEE
ON ITS FIRST SESSION

29. At its 8th meeting, on 13 September 1991, the Preparatory Committee adopted the report on its first session in its English version. In the absence of the report in the other official languages, some delegations reserved their final approval until its publication in those other versions.

ANNEX I

AGENDA

1. Opening of the session.
2. Election of officers.
3. Adoption of the agenda and rules of procedure.
4. Organization of work.
5. Agenda, rules of procedure, dates, duration, venue of and participation at the World Conference.
6. Preparatory meetings and activities at the international, regional and national levels.
7. Studies and other documentation for the World Conference.
8. Organization of the work of future sessions of the Preparatory Committee.
9. Adoption of the report of the Preparatory Committee.

ANNEX II

DECISIONS ADOPTED BY THE PREPARATORY COMMITTEE FOR THE WORLD CONFERENCE
ON HUMAN RIGHTS AT ITS FIRST SESSION

PC/1. Convening of the World Conference on Human Rights

At its 8th meeting, on 13 September 1991, the Preparatory Committee decided without a vote, pursuant to the mandate conferred on it by the General Assembly in paragraph 3 of Assembly resolution 45/155, to propose:

(a) That the provisional agenda for the World Conference and the documentation related thereto be taken up by the Preparatory Committee at its second session;

(b) That the draft rules of procedure for the World Conference be taken up by the Preparatory Committee at its second session;

(c) That the World Conference be convened at Berlin for a period of two weeks in 1993;

(d) That the Secretary-General give the Conference and the preparatory process thereto the widest possible publicity and that the General Assembly request the Secretary-General to ensure full coordination of public information activities in the area of human rights within the United Nations system.

PC/2. Future sessions of the Preparatory Committee

At its 8th meeting, on 13 September 1991, the Preparatory Committee decided, without a vote, pursuant to the mandate conferred on it by the General Assembly in paragraph 3 of Assembly resolution 45/155, to recommend that it meet for three further sessions at Geneva, twice in 1992 and once in 1993, the next session to last two weeks and the two other sessions one to two weeks each, if this is agreed to be necessary. It decided furthermore to recommend that no more than two meetings take place simultaneously during the sessions of the Preparatory Committee and that no intersessional working group be established.

PC/3. Participation of representatives of least developed countries in the preparatory meetings and the Conference itself

At its 8th meeting, on 13 September 1991, the Preparatory Committee noted that a number of least developed countries had been unable to send representatives to its first session because of the absence of the voluntary contributions provided for in paragraph 7 of the General Assembly resolution 45/155. It decided, without a vote, to recommend to the General Assembly to reiterate its invitation for contributions of extrabudgetary resources to meet the cost of participation of representatives of least developed countries in the preparatory meetings and the Conference itself. It further decided, also without a vote, that the General Assembly request the secretariat to intensify its efforts in this regard.

PC/4. Regional meetings in preparation for the
World Conference on Human Rights

At its 8th meeting, on 13 September 1991, the Preparatory Committee decided, without a vote, in accordance with the objectives and provisions of General Assembly resolution 45/155, to recommend that regional meetings be convened for each region that so desires within the institutional framework or with the assistance of the regional commissions and that these meetings be financed as part of the preparatory work for the World Conference, as recommended for consideration by the Commission on Human Rights in its resolution 1991/30 (annex, paragraph 8).

PC/5. Studies and documentation for the World Conference

At its 8th meeting, on 13 September 1991, the Preparatory Committee decided, without a vote, pursuant to the mandate conferred on it by the General Assembly in paragraph 3 of Assembly resolution 45/155, to recommend that the Secretary-General be requested to prepare the following documentation as soon as possible and to report to the next session of the Preparatory Committee on the progress made:

(1) A limited number of short, analytical and action-oriented studies on issues referred to in paragraph 1 of General Assembly resolution 45/155 and Commission on Human Rights resolution 1991/30, in particular in paragraph 2 of the annex thereto, and also bearing in mind documentation prepared for, as well as statements made at, the first session of the Preparatory Committee;

(2) Reports of meetings which have been organized under the auspices of the United Nations human rights programme pursuant to General Assembly resolution 45/155;

(3) A reference guide to all United Nations studies and reports on human rights or related aspects;

(4) An update of United Nations Action in the Field of Human Rights;

(5) An update of A Compilation of International Instruments and Status of International Instruments including also texts of regional instruments on human rights.

It further decided, also without a vote, that the experts and consultants employed for that purpose should be selected with due regard to equitable geographic distribution.

PC/6. Participation of human rights experts in the Preparatory
Committee and the World Conference

At its 8th meeting, on 13 September 1991, the Preparatory Committee decided, without a vote, to recommend that the General Assembly encourage the Chairman of the Commission on Human Rights, the Chairmen or other designated members of human rights bodies including the Chairman of bodies established under international human rights agreements or their designated representatives, as well as special and thematic rapporteurs and the Chairmen or designated members of working groups, to contribute as observers by taking part as appropriate in the work of the Preparatory Committee and the World Conference.

ANNEX III

LIST OF DOCUMENTS ISSUED FOR THE FIRST SESSION OF THE
PREPARATORY COMMITTEE FOR THE WORLD CONFERENCE

Documents issued in the general series

<u>Symbol</u>	<u>Agenda item</u>	<u>Title</u>
A/CONF.157/PC/1	3	Provisional agenda
A/CONF.157/PC/1/Add.1	3	Annotations to the provisional agenda prepared by the Secretary-General
A/CONF.157/PC/2/Rev.1	4	Organization of work
A/CONF.157/PC/3	5, 6, 7 and 8	Summary of the discussions on the World Conference on Human Rights at the forty-seventh session of the Commission on Human Rights: note by the Chairman of the Commission at its forty-seventh session.
A/CONF.157/PC/4	5	Letter dated 22 May 1991 from the Permanent Representative of Germany to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General of the United Nations
A/CONF.157/PC/5	5	Note verbale dated 17 July 1991 from the Permanent Mission of the Republic of Argentina to the International Organizations at Geneva addressed to the Secretary-General of the United Nations
A/CONF.157/PC/6	5, 6, and 7	Report of the Secretary-General: Recommendations on the World Conference and its preparation submitted by Governments
A/CONF.157/PC/6/Add.1	5, 6, and 7	Report of the Secretary-General: Recommendations on the World Conference and its preparation submitted by specialized agencies and United Nations organs

Documents issued in the general series

<u>Symbol</u>	<u>Agenda item</u>	<u>Title</u>
A/CONF.157/PC/6/Add.2	5, 6, and 7	Report of the Secretary-General: Recommendations on the World Conference and its preparation submitted by non-governmental organizations in consultative status
A/CONF.157/PC/6/Add.3	5, 6, and 7	Report of the Secretary-General: Recommendations on the World Conference and its preparation submitted by specialized agencies and United Nations organs
A/CONF.157/PC/6/Add.4	5, 6, and 7	Report of the Secretary-General: Recommendations on the World Conference and its preparation submitted by United Nations human rights treaty bodies
A/CONF.157/PC/6/Add.5	5, 6, and 7	Report of the Secretary-General: Recommendations on the World Conference and its preparation submitted by Governments
A/CONF.157/PC/6/Add.6	5, 6, and 7	Report of the Secretary-General: Recommendations on the World Conference and its preparation submitted by non-governmental organizations in consultative status .
A/CONF.157/PC/6/Add.7	5, 6, and 7	Report of the Secretary-General: Recommendations on the World Conference and its preparation submitted by non-governmental organizations in consultative status
A/CONF.157/PC/6/Add.8	5, 6, and 7	Report of the Secretary-General: Recommendations on the World Conference and its preparation submitted by non-governmental organizations in consultative status
A/CONF.157/PC/6/Add.9	5, 6, and 7	Report of the Secretary-General: Recommendations on the World Conference and its preparation submitted by a human rights body

Documents issued in the general series

<u>Symbol</u>	<u>Agenda item</u>	<u>Title</u>
A/CONF.157/PC/7	7	Letter dated 20 August 1991 from the Permanent Representative of Iceland to the United Nations Office at Geneva addressed to the Under-Secretary-General for Human Rights and Secretary-General of the World Conference on Human Rights
A/CONF.157/PC/8	5	Note by the Secretary: Draft provisional rules of procedure of the Conference
A/CONF.157/PC/9	5	Note verbale dated 21 August 1991 from the Permanent Mission of the Republic of Argentina to the International Organizations at Geneva addressed to the Secretary-General of the United Nations
A/CONF.157/PC/10	5, 6, 7 and 8	Letter dated 11 September 1991 from the head of delegation of the United States of America to the Under-Secretary-General for Human Rights
A/CONF.157/PC/11	5, 6, 7 and 8	Letter dated 13 September 1991 from the Permanent Representative of Venezuela to the United Nations Office at Geneva, on behalf of the Latin American and Caribbean group, to the Under-Secretary-General for Human Rights
A/CONF.157/PC/12	5, 6, 7 and 8	Introductory statement to the Preparatory Committee by the Secretary-General of the World Conference
A/CONF.157/PC/13	5, 6, 7 and 8	Report of the Preparatory Committee on its first session

Documents issued in the limited series

<u>Symbol</u>	<u>Agenda item</u>	<u>Title</u>
A/CONF.157/PC/CRP.1	7	Informal note by the secretariat: Possible topics for background documentation
A/CONF.157/PC/CRP.2	5, 6, and 7	Note verbale dated 27 August 1991 from the Permanent Mission of Peru to the United Nations Office at Geneva addressed to the Centre for Human Rights
A/CONF.157/PC/L.1	9	Draft report of the Preparatory Committee for the World Conference on Human Rights
A/CONF.157/PC/L.2	9	List of draft decisions for consideration by the Preparatory Committee for the World Conference at its first session
